

1. What is required in Montana to be a traffic education (TE) instructor and teach driver education?

Five things are required. All teachers of traffic education must have:

- a valid Montana educator license issued by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), Educator Licensure Unit, Legal Division;
- approval as a teacher of traffic education issued by the OPI Traffic Education Unit, with each renewal of their Montana educator license;
- a minimum of 8 - semester hours of credit coursework in traffic safety education leading toward a 20 semester credit minor. The initial 8-semester-hour block must include a classroom and behind-the-wheel traffic education teacher preparation course;

After initial approval, for each succeeding renewal of the Montana educator license, the teacher must accumulate an additional 4 semester hours of qualifying coursework that leads toward the TE minor requirements. Once the minor is achieved a "TE99" teaching endorsement may be awarded;

- a valid driver license; and
- a responsible driving record, as determined by Administrative Rule 10.13.310. A complete copy of the rule is available on the Web:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/DriverEd/>

2. What kind of Montana educator license is required?

The law allows for any type of valid Montana educator license.

3. Once an individual obtains a TE endorsement, does the TE teacher need to continue to apply for approval to teach driver education?

Yes.

The TE approval and TE endorsement are not the same. After a TE endorsement is earned and appears on the educator license, no additional TE coursework is required. However, to keep approval to teach driver education, the instructor must meet the cyclical requirements for educator relicensure, and apply to the Traffic Education Unit of the OPI for TE approval.

In addition to the requirements to be licensed and endorsed for TE, the law also requires a satisfactory driving record. If the record is satisfactory, an approval letter will be issued for the duration of the licensure cycle.

However, an instructor's driving record is reviewed each year the instructor teaches traffic education. If an instructor does not maintain an acceptable driving record in accordance with Administrative Rules of Montana 10.13.310, their approval to teach will be revoked until such time that they are in compliance.

4. If a person does not have a TE "99" endorsement and was not able to obtain an additional 4 TE-qualifying credits during the 5-year renewal cycle, can they be approved to teach driver education?

Policy allows for emergency or extenuating exceptions. In both cases, the objective is to assure continued TE instruction by qualified individuals and facilitate the completion of the TE "99" endorsement.

Both exceptions require documentation that the school has advertised and no other qualified instructors are available. In the case of the one-time, one-year emergency extension request, the instructor must outline how the deficient coursework will be completed during the following year.

In very unusual cases a one-time extenuating circumstances extension of up to two years may be granted. For this option, the instructor must also show how they will complete the TE minor and obtain the TE "99" endorsement by the end of the extension.



5. What higher educational institutions will award the TE minor?

Montana State University – Northern (MSU-N) is presently the only Montana institution that offers a TE minor. The coursework involves 20 semester credits. Contact MSU-N about cooperative efforts with other Montana universities, whereby you can obtain a TE minor or be recommended for TE “99” endorsement by combining coursework from MSU-N with coursework from another Montana university you may be attending.

6. Can Montana educator Renewal Units be used toward completing the course work required for a TE minor and TE endorsement?

No.

Renewal Units do not qualify as college coursework, and, therefore, do not qualify toward the TE minor. However, MSU-N often offers college credit for qualifying conferences and workshops. If an individual signs up for the qualifying TE credit, pays the fees, and completes the assignments, the earned college credit may apply toward the minor.

You may not receive college credit and Renewal Units for the same workshop or conference. You may only obtain one or the other.

This document is available online at
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/DriverEd/>

For further information on Traffic Education contact:

Regarding OPI TE approval:

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Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

Montana Traffic Education



Instructor Endorsement And Approval

Questions And Answers

Based upon 10.13.310 Administrative Rules of
Montana